



Connecting U.P. Traffic Safety Professionals

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# REGIONAL TRAFFIC SAFETY CONCERNS IDENTIFIED AT FIRST U.P. PLANNING MEETING

**D**espite below freezing temperatures, the first Upper Peninsula Traffic Safety Planning Meeting was held in January at Northern Michigan University in Marquette. Sponsored by AAA of Michigan and the Office of Highway Safety Planning, 60 traffic safety professionals representing law enforcement, the courts, EMS, road engineers, commercial vehicles, health departments, and businesses came together to discuss prevailing traffic safety concerns in our region.

The meeting featured presentations on U.P. crashes, MDOT projects, road improvement programs, Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, motorcycles, snowmobiles and drunk driving, and police traffic services.



First U.P. Planning Meeting held at Northern Michigan University

Discussion focused on problem identification and special needs of U.P. residents. OHSP program coordinators from Lansing and the U.P. were on hand to hear U.P. concerns. For example, winter-

driving crashes prompted significant conversation. Concerns were voiced that winter-driving safety campaigns begin too late in the season—after the first deadly storms of the year. Improved winter-driving training for driver’s education students was also considered.

A survey was distributed at the meeting to identify top U.P. traffic safety concerns. Audience members identified the most serious traffic safety issues facing the U.P. (in order of importance):

- Drunk Driving
- Winter Driving Crashes
- Snowmobile Crashes
- Speed
- Law Enforcement Manpower Issues
- Driver Education/Youth Alcohol Issues
- Repeat/Habitual Offenders
- Diminishing Funds for Law Enforcement
- Lack of Winter Driving Education
- Deer Crashes

OHSP staff members returned to Lansing with a better understanding of traffic safety problems in the U.P. and a resolve to address the prevailing issues as strategic plans are developed in 2005 and beyond. Participant evaluations revealed that participants would like to make the U.P. planning meeting an annual event.

## Passengers in Vehicles Need to Buckle Up Too

**F**astening the seat belt protects motorists in a crash, but the risk of dying in a wreck rises if fellow passengers do not buckle up, researchers said. In crashes where a back seat passenger was not wearing a seat belt, the risk of death to the belted passenger in the front seat rose 20 percent. Similarly, a back seat belted passenger faced a 22 percent greater risk if the passenger in the front seat was not buckled up. Examining 12 years of U.S. crash data, the researchers from Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center in Seattle concluded that one in six deaths of front seat passengers wearing a seat belt might be prevented if the back seat passenger was also strapped in.

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# HAPPY SPRING!

This has been a busy winter filled with exciting traffic safety happenings. Law enforcement mobilizations were successfully conducted in November and December and 60 persons braved blizzard warnings on a blustery day in January to attend the first U.P. Planning Meeting conducted in collaboration with AAA Michigan.

Organizations know that good planning isn't done in isolation. Putting together a highway safety plan on an annual basis involves a great deal of data collection and investigation—trying to determine if there are trends in where, when and why crashes occur, and the demographics behind who are typically involved. These issues involve a variety of agencies and counter-measures. Some crashes may occur because of the design of an intersection and need to be addressed by a traffic engineer or road commission.

Some involve animals or environmental conditions. Alcohol impaired driving is a frequent contributor to crashes, and to solve that problem may take a multi-disciplined intervention by law enforcement, the courts, probation, rehabilitation and treatment. And while the lack of safety belt use may not often contribute to a crash occurring, it does make a difference in the survivability of a crash.

It has long been the goal of OHSP to get input from local agencies and community members in order to assist us in creating the programs and services that will have a measurable impact on deaths and injuries caused by traffic crashes. The recent U.P. Planning Meeting was our first step toward that goal, but don't think for a minute that we are going to leave it at that! Here at the U.P. office, we are committed to getting your feedback, as well as sharing our crash data resources with you. Together, we will continue to build a highway safety program that will take us to our common goal—no more needless tragedies.

With that said, don't ever hesitate to call or e-mail us to share an idea or complaint.

And if you're in Marquette, stop at our office near the big red barn and say "hello!"



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*Iron Mountain Post Commander First Lieutenant Robert Pernaski presents WOBW/WJNR Radio News Director Aaron Harper the OHSP Setting the Example Media Award*

## SETTING THE EXAMPLE

### Aaron Harper, WOBW/ WJNR Radio, Iron Mountain

Following a nomination by Iron Mountain Post Commander First Lieutenant Robert Pernaski, WOBW/WJNR Radio News Director Aaron Harper was awarded the Office of Highway Safety Planning Setting the Example Media Award in December.

"For many years, Aaron Harper has been a good friend to law enforcement. He is always willing to cover traffic safety initiatives and has donated countless hours of free airtime for public service announcements, news releases, and traffic safety updates," stated Pernaski in his nomination of Harper.

To promote safe driving, Pernaski and Harper team up for a monthly 15-minute program called "In Touch" where they discuss hot traffic safety topics. Says Pernaski, "Bottom line, Aaron is very pro traffic safety and is very deserving of this award. He never hesitates to jump in and lend a helping hand." Residents of Menominee, Dickinson, Iron, and Western Marquette counties can tune-in to "In Touch" at 8:45 a.m. the second Wednesday of each month at WJNR 100.7.

## UPCOMING MOBILIZATION:

**Click It or Ticket**  
**May 24–June 6, 2004**

**Call OHSP for details**  
**906-225-7036**

# Captain Myles McCormack Named 8th District Commander

The Office of Highway Safety Planning U.P. Regional Office congratulates Captain Myles McCormack on his promotion to commander of the 8th District. With 18 years of Michigan State Police service and five years as an officer with the Houghton Police Department, McCormack draws on his vast experience and accomplishments in making decisions that support public safety and service in the U.P.

Traffic enforcement is an extremely important issue for the Department of State Police, according to McCormack. "Traffic enforcement ensures the safety of the motoring public as they travel the highways and byways of the U.P."

McCormack identifies the prevailing traffic issues in the Upper Peninsula as those violations resulting in injuries and fatalities, particularly speeding, careless driving, reckless driving, and driving while intoxicated. "Our focus is to target those violations that tend to result in crashes where people are getting hurt and/or killed. Certainly a central focus of MSP enforcement is seat belt usage. This is some-



Captain Myles McCormack

thing that I continually reinforce with all State Police personnel in the U.P."

Upcoming enforcement includes increased patrols this summer, especially during peak travel times including holidays and weekends. "We will target those travel routes that in the past have had a higher incident of crashes. By targeting those traffic violators in specific locations, we hope to have a significant impact on reducing traffic crashes in which people are getting hurt or killed."

Prior to his promotion, McCormack served for five years as 8th District inspector/assistant district commander, and as post commander of the St. Ignace post, detective sergeant and uniform sergeant at

the Negaunee post, and as a trooper at the L'Anse and Flat Rock posts.

Originally from Laurium, McCormack now resides in Ishpeming Township with his wife Connie and daughter Mallory. Mallory is a junior at Westwood High School and is a member of the state championship girl's basketball team. His son Justin is a freshman at MSU in James Madison College.

## Stay Current on U.P. Traffic Safety News Attend the next U.P. Traffic Safety Committee Meeting

June 10, 2004—10:00 a.m. • Wahlstrom's Restaurant, Harvey  
Call Lea Casper for details 906-225-7030

## COOL LINKS

Jim Harrington of the Marquette County Health Department recommended this "Cool Link." **[www.upprevent.org](http://www.upprevent.org)** is a web site hosted by the Upper Peninsula Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition. This site offers valuable prevention information and provides great links to sites for teens, parents, and interested community members. Log on and you'll find drug and alcohol fact sheets, resource materials for parents, OHSP crash statistics, data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens, and other great info. Check it out!



# 9th Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit is April 27-28



**Holiday Inn South • Lansing  
April 27-28, 2004**

**T**he 9th Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit will be held on April 27-28 at the Holiday Inn South in Lansing. The registration fee is \$80 before March 26 or \$125 after that date. You can register for the Summit online—just log on to [www.michigan.gov/ohsp](http://www.michigan.gov/ohsp) and click on the Summit section. For more information on Summit registration, contact OHSP at 517-336-6477.

Holiday Inn South Lansing is located at 6820 S. Cedar Street, just off of I-96. Conference room rates are \$65 for single accommodations and \$85 for double accommodations. To receive the conference room rate, registrations must be made by Saturday, March 27, 2004. To make a reservation, call 800-333-8123.

## Upper Peninsula Officers Arrest 170 During December Drunk Driving Crackdown

**T**here were no breaks for Upper Peninsula (U.P.) motorists violating the law in December as law enforcement officers arrested 170 motorists for alcohol-related offenses during the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* crackdown.

The December mobilization, Dec. 19, 2003-Jan. 4, 2004, was the first under Michigan's new, tougher drunk driving law that took effect Sept. 30. The new law lowered the limit at which a motorist is considered a drunk driver to .08

blood alcohol content. More than 2,700 people were arrested for alcohol violations statewide.

In addition to the 170 alcohol arrests, 26 U.P. law enforcement agencies stopped 2,931 motorists and issued 6 child restraint violations, 87 safety belt citations, 49 driving while license suspended, 550 speeding tickets, 224 misdemeanor offenses and 49 felonies. For more specific results, including a breakdown by county, visit [www.michigan.gov/ohsp](http://www.michigan.gov/ohsp).

## U.P. RESOURCE CENTER

**T**he following alcohol-related videos are available for loan from the U.P. Resource Center. Call Lea at 906-225-7030 ext. 240.

☐ **Students Against Drunk Driving** (8 minutes).

Produced by the St. Ignace SADD Chapter. Demonstrates the impact of drunk driving from both the victim and offender's points of view. Highlights a 2000 hit-and-run crash in St. Ignace in which 17-year-old Jennifer Corwin was killed.

- ☐ **End Result** (17 minutes). This video is a hard-hitting, fast-moving collage of alcohol-related crashes involving young people. A dispatcher's voice is used to narrate Police and EMS responses to crashes. A seat belt message is also interspersed throughout the video. Actual crash scene footage is graphic.

☐ **Wake Me Up From This Nightmare** (22:08 minutes) Four teenagers meet actual victims of drunk drivers as well as a young man that killed a person while driving under the influence of alcohol. The students then encounter a mock crash scene where they learn that they themselves have been injured or killed. The consequences to the teenagers and their families are revealed.

☐ **Brandon Tells His Story** (28 minutes). Seventeen-year-old Brandon Silveria crashed his car after drinking and spent 2 1/2 months in a coma and two years in rehab. His speech is slurred, his walk unsteady, his memory permanently impaired. You'll hear first hand from Brandon the consequences of that one irresponsible decision.

☐ **Just One Night** (28 minutes). A family man kills the passenger in his car after drinking socially. Sentenced to 4-8 years for manslaughter, Tom Boyle tells the story of losing everything in "just one night."



# ESCANABA RESIDENT NAMED 2003 MOTOR CARRIER OFFICER OF THE YEAR

**M**ichigan State Police Motor Carrier Officer Erick Kestila of the Gladstone Post is the recipient of the 2003 Motor Carrier Officer of the Year Award.

Since 1985, the Michigan Trucking Association has sponsored this award to recognize the Motor Carrier officer who symbolizes outstanding professional ethics, dedication to duty and concern for giving back to their community.

Kestila was recognized for his enthusiasm and motivation both on the job and in his community. A Motor Carrier officer for the past 17 years, Kestila is knowledgeable in all commercial motor vehicle regulations. He also inspects school buses in the northern Michigan area to ensure the safety of school children. Over the past year, Kestila has represented the Motor Carrier Division in a variety of public forums.

On his own time, Kestila is actively involved with the Boy Scouts of America. He serves as a scoutmaster with a local troop and as an officer on the district committee. In addition, Kestila assists with the local Girl Scout program and is involved with local law enforcement associations. A native of Negaunee, Kestila now resides in Escanaba with his wife, Karen, and two daughters, Kay and Mariah.

## Marquette Police Department Wins Challenge

**C**ongratulations to the Marquette Police Department for winning the December *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* Challenge. Marquette will receive a \$5,000 grant to purchase equipment for the department.

To be eligible for the next round of \$5,000 equipment or overtime grant prizes, just fax in your challenge statistics for the final two OHSP mobilizations.

May 24–June 6, 2004 *Click It or Ticket*

June 25–July 11, 2004 *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*

Visit our web site for information and copies of entry and reporting forms at [www.michigan.gov/ohsp](http://www.michigan.gov/ohsp) and click on Specialized Divisions, Office of Highway Safety Planning, Law Enforcement Programs, Law Enforcement Challenge Information. You may also call Lea Casper at 906-225-7030.

## SENATE PANEL REVIEWING TEEN PASSENGER LIMITS

**A** bill to limit teen drivers to one non-related passenger will see more discussion in the Senate Transportation Committee to resolve potential enforcement concerns raised by committee members.

The goal of the legislation (*HB 4600*) is to reduce teen crashes and deaths by reducing distractions in the vehicle, supporters said. Various groups brought statistics that

showed the chances of a crash increased significantly the more friends a teen was allowed to transport.

Rep. Ed Gaffney (R–Grosse Pointe), the bill sponsor, said teen crashes accounted for 25 percent of the traffic deaths last year. "If 326 people were killed by some kind of disease or illness, especially children, we'd sit up and take notice," he said. "And we're talking about children here, not adults."

But Sen. Burton Leland (D–Detroit) said the bill does not go far enough if the goal is to eliminate distractions for new drivers. "There are a myriad of reasons young people get in accidents," he said. "Maybe we ought to stick everything in the same basket and make it all illegal."

He said he would be offering an amendment to the bill that would prohibit teen drivers not only from having friends in the car, but also from such activities as talking on a cell phone, eating, applying makeup and listening to loud music while driving. But he said the amendment would still leave concerns about enforcement. "How is a cop going to know how old you are?" he said. There is a potential that the stop for having too many passengers for a young driver could be used as a basis for searches for drugs or other activity for which a police officer could not have otherwise made a stop without more cause, he said.

### Restrictions on Teenage Passengers Riding with Teenage Drivers

Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of Americans support laws limiting the number of teenage passengers who may ride with inexperienced teen drivers, according to a nationwide poll released by AAA, yet just half of states have these lifesaving laws. Crash data show that passenger restriction laws, an important component of Graduated Driver Licensing systems (GDL), are the most effective way to reduce teen crashes, deaths and injuries. **For more information, visit the AAA website at [www.aaa.com](http://www.aaa.com).**

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## **SAFE HOLIDAYS for U.P. Shoppers**

**T**he Marquette County Sheriff's Office hosted a Red Ribbon/SAFE HOLIDAYS event at the Westwood Mall in Marquette on December 12. Local law enforcement officers served 475 non-alcoholic drinks to shoppers to promote safe and responsible holiday celebrations. Mall-goers were provided with non-alcoholic drink recipes, tips on being conscientious party hosts, and substance abuse and traffic safety information. The MADD Upper Peninsula victim memorial board was on display and red ribbons were distributed throughout Marquette County to promote safe and sober driving, especially during the holiday season. Participating in the event were the Marquette County Sheriff's Office, Marquette Police Department, Michigan State Police (MSP) Negaunee, and Northern Michigan University (NMU).



*Don Peterman, NMU Public Safety; Betsy Harris, U.P. MADD; Sheriff Mike Lovelace, Marquette County Sheriff's Office; and Lieutenant Anthony Benaglio, MSP Negaunee, serve non-alcoholic drinks to shoppers at Westwood Mall.*

## **2004 Secondary Road Patrol Training Conference is May 11-12**

**T**he Secondary Road Patrol Training Conference will be held on May 11-12, 2004 at the Holiday Inn South in Lansing. The Secondary Road Patrol is a state-funded grant program that provides county sheriff departments with funding for traffic patrols of county and local roads outside the corporate limits of cities and villages. Participation in the Secondary Road Patrol Training Conference is by invitation only. For more information, contact Sandy Eyre at 517-333-5303 or [eyres@michigan.gov](mailto:eyres@michigan.gov).